

British aristocrat fears UFO cover-up

CHRON. 3/4/82
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LONDON (AP) — Whatever the truth about unidentified flying objects, Britons are seeing more of them, the House of Lords learned in a close encounter between a government peer and an aristocratic UFO buff.

The Earl of Clancarty, 70, founder of a worldwide UFO movement, Contact International, said he had logged more than 2,000 press reports last year of British sightings.

Lord Clancarty is also a top member of the Ancient Astronaut Society, which theorizes that creatures from other planets visited the earth in spacecraft in ancient times, and is evidently suspicious of a cover-up by the Conservative government. He wanted to know what the military was doing about the UFO sightings.

Viscount Long, replying Thursday for the government, said there had been a total of 600 UFO reports up from only 150 in 1978, and the Defense Ministry checked them all out — but only to make sure they weren't enemy aircraft.

"All UFO reports are passed to operations staff to examine them purely for their possible defense implications. For example, a Soviet aircraft which might approach our defense system," said Viscount Long.

Several other peers joined in. What happened to the reports? asked Lord Hill-Norton, a former head of the Royal Navy.

Since 1967 the Defense Ministry has filed them all away, but before that they were thrown away after five years as being of "no interest," said Viscount Long.

"Who was it who decided they were of no interest?" persisted Lord Hill-Norton.

"I thought you were going to say the Royal Navy had seen the Loch Ness monster many times," said Viscount Long.

Addressing himself to Lord Clancarty, he added: "If the noble Lord is suspicious the Ministry of Defense is covering up in any way, I can assure you there is no reason why they should."

Royal Air Force spokeswoman Sarah Cullum told The Associated Press later: "All of the incidents reported to us were looked at to see whether they constituted a threat. By threat we don't mean Martians, because we don't consider them a threat."

Glowing UFO sighted near Big Spring

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BIG SPRING, Texas (UPI) — Night shift police officers and nurses watched a glowing object with flashing lights hover on the horizon, but were unable to discover its source.

"They all described it the same way," dispatcher Janie Schooler said. "I guess what they saw was really there. But it sounds kind of weird doesn't it?"

Officers armed with binoculars watched the mysterious object hover just above the horizon west of town for 45 minutes Wednesday in the early morning hours, another dispatcher said.

"The officers said it looked like it was just west of Big Spring," the dispatcher said. "They described it as white at the center with green and white lights flashing around it."

"It didn't look like an airplane or anything," he said. "We had a guy with binoculars looking at it, it did not seem to be moving."

"We received a call from a citizen at 1:57 a.m.," he said. "A nurse at a hospital was outside and saw it and called the other nurses at the hospital out to look."

The department received calls from two other residents who reported seeing the glowing object.

Ms. Schooler said police contacted the control tower at the Midland airport, 35 miles west of Big Spring, but "they couldn't spot anything on radar."

The police department spokesman said it was difficult to judge the size of the object because no one knew how far it was from town.

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Object from sky causes rink to melt

BEND, Ore. (UPI) — An unknown object from the sky, possibly a meteor, punctured a lava pool beneath a couple's backyard skating rink, causing warm water to begin melting the ice despite sub-freezing temperatures.

Donald and Jerrie Morelock said they discovered a hole 8 to 10 inches in diameter in the foot-thick ice Monday and were able to determine the object also had broken through the thick concrete and steel-reinforced protective covering over the lava pool. They said the surface level of the 100-foot-long rink about 20 feet from their home west of Bend was dropping as the warmer water mixed with the skating pond.

A meteorologist told the Morelocks that this was not the time of year for meteor showers, but said there had been a report of a meteor being sighted in the area. He said there also was a possibility the rink may have been hit by space junk, a piece of a satellite.

The Morelocks will have to wait until the ice completely thaws before the hole on the lava pool's roof is checked for a further clue on what punctured both surfaces. They also will find out then whether the lava water mixing with the rink water may have killed off the fish they kept below the ice's surface.

Court allows agency to retain UFO secrets

Chronicle News Services 3/10/82 H CHRON.

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court refused to order the National Security Agency to disclose whatever it knows about UFOs.

The NSA, in opposing an appeal for disclosure, said the disclosure would reveal some of its top secret electronic monitoring and interception techniques.

The appeal for disclosure was made to the high court by the New York City-based group Citizens Against UFO Secrecy. The group appealed for release of the material under the Freedom of Information Act.

The case began in late 1978 when the UFO group filed a formal request for 18 NSA documents under the information access law. NSA refused to release the papers, claiming they are exempt from disclosure.

The group then filed a lawsuit, seeking the release of all papers "in the possession or under the control of the National Security Agency relating to or pertaining to unidentified

CHRON. 3/10/82 S PARKER
flying objects and the UFO phenomena."

In response, NSA admitted it has 135 "UFO-related" documents, but again declined to release them, citing its top-secret work.

NSA is a Defense Department agency headquartered at Fort Meade, Md. One of its main responsibilities is to gather foreign intelligence information by intercepting radio communications sent to or from foreign governments.

"It is the protection of this critical information that is at the heart of the instant case," the agency said.

NSA, urging a federal district court to throw out the case, filed one public affidavit and one confidential affidavit that was reviewed in private by Judge Gerhard Gesell.

Gesell dismissed the case in 1980, declaring, "Release of this material could seriously jeopardize the work of the agency and the security of the United States."

The UFO group then took the dispute to the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, but that panel affirmed Gesell's decision.